

necessary including pension reforms—to meet their obligations. The Public Employee Pension Transparency Act would reaffirm that State and local pension obligations are solely the responsibility of those entities and proclaim that the Federal Government will not provide a bailout. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to join with me to enact this legislation.

H.R. 4853: THE MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2010

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4853, the Middle Class Tax Relief Act of 2010. This legislation permanently extends the tax cut provisions passed in 2001 and 2003 for individuals with incomes below \$200,000 and \$250,000 for couples. It would permanently extend the 10%, 23% and 28% marginal tax brackets, as well as the 33% bracket as it applies to income of less than \$250,000. It would also continue the maximum \$1,000 child tax credit and the maximum 15% rate on capital gains and dividends where income is less than \$250,000. It would permanently reduce the tax known as the “marriage penalty,” and it includes a 2-year “patch” intended to prevent more than 25 million Americans from being subject to the alternative minimum tax over the next two years. It also permanently extends expensing rules for small businesses.

I am glad to see so much focus on the unemployed and underemployed during debate on the potential extension of the tax cuts. However, the myth that we must pass tax cuts to the wealthy in order to help those without jobs has been disproven several times over. If the concern is about the plight of the 15 million unemployed Americans, the estimated 12 million underemployed, and the estimated 6 million long-term unemployed, we should do the humane and economically efficient thing: extend and expand unemployment assistance.

Instead, the debate is about whether to extend tax cuts to the wealthy. Nearly a quarter of all the income in America today goes to the top 1% of Americans. In recent years, the highest-income Americans have received by far the largest pre-tax raises of any group. They have also had their tax rates drop by far more. Americans have said in polls that they want to see the Bush tax cuts on households making more than \$250,000 per year expire. For the wealthiest 3% of Americans, expiration would simply mean a return to 1990's tax rates if that were to happen. Yet, many of the same advocates for passing a massive tax cut for the wealthy are bemoaning a growing budget deficit.

We must not ask the middle class, the working class, those who are not fortunate enough to make \$200,000 or \$100,000 or even \$20,000 a year, to pay so that the wealthiest Americans can enjoy the lowest income tax rates that any wealthy American has had since the 1960s. We must not tell the poor, the unemployed, and the underemployed, that we cannot help you, because we have decided that the wealthiest Americans need a tax cut more than you need a lift to get you

through these brutal times. Those that need our help must not hear from Congress: go and figure it out for yourselves.

S. 3307, THE HEALTHY, HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010

HON. HENRY C. “HANK” JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This bill is a good first step in addressing childhood hunger and poor nutrition, which are two of the greatest public health challenges facing the United States today.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, which passed the Senate unanimously. It contains the most significant improvements in 30 years to the child nutrition programs that serve millions of children across our country. This legislation expands access to healthy foods for kids, makes it easier for low-income kids to enroll in the school meal programs, improves the nutritional quality of school meals, significantly decreases the availability of junk food and sugary beverages from school vending machines, and expands access to after-school meals for low-income kids.

This is a vote that I do not take lightly. While I never questioned the need to improve child nutrition programs across the country, I did question the Senate's choice to pay for this legislation with a reduction in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP benefits are an essential part of this nation's nutrition safety net. More than 41 million Americans rely upon SNAP benefits monthly to put food on the table. According to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Data and Statistics Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Report, released in October 2010, the number of households in my home state of Georgia receiving food stamps jumped from 581,709 total households in July of 2009 to 716,749 households in July of 2010—an increase of 23.2% in just one year. Many SNAP recipients are children or seniors, and I had serious concerns that the SNAP reduction would be a classic case of robbing Peter to pay Paul. I was deeply concerned that reducing SNAP benefits to pay for this bill would hurt the people it was meant to help—children of low-income families striving to make ends meet during this turbulent economy.

After a long thought process, I stand here before you as a strong supporter of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. As a Member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, I joined a letter to the Obama Administration expressing opposition to reducing SNAP benefits to fund this bill, or any other legislative priority. The President and his Administration share these concerns and have assured Congress that it will work with us to restore this cut and use their current authorities to protect the integrity of SNAP benefits and further improve children's access to nutrition programs.

This bill would be instrumental in helping to address the growing crises of child hunger and also of childhood obesity. In terms of child hunger, last year, more than 1.29 million Georgia students participated in the Free and

Reduced Price Lunch Program. Obesity is a national crisis, but it is of a particular concern in my home state of Georgia which has the second highest prevalence of obese 10–17 year olds in the nation. The provisions in the child nutrition bill that improve nutritional quality of foods served on school campuses throughout the school day and those that strengthen Local School Wellness Policies can help to combat the rise in childhood obesity we see here in Georgia. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey report released in September 2010, 22.3% of Georgia's children live in poverty—that's more than half a million children under age 18.

I would be remiss if I did not mention two key individuals in my district that have worked hard to combat childhood obesity. Dr. Yvonne Butler founded Healthy Kids Smart Kids. Healthy Kids Smart Kids is an organization that fights childhood obesity and educates adults and children on healthy eating and staying active. She started the first sugar-free school program in Georgia at Browns Mill Elementary School in Lithonia. Ms. Pat “Shy” Haggans is a certified personal trainer and lifestyle coach who founded Generation Next Sports Performance facility in Lithonia where she specializes in getting kids fit to fight obesity. Like Dr. Butler, she has helped hundreds of kids shed pounds through exercise, planning and lifestyle changes to combat childhood obesity. She assists parents as well to ensure that the next generation will be healthier than ours.

It is important to recognize that this bill would not be on the floor now if it were not for Representatives GEORGE MILLER, ROSA DELAURO, and JAMES MCGOVERN. Their leadership in conducting negotiations with the Obama Administration was key to moving this bill forward.

I strongly support the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which would also help advance the Administration's goal of solving the problem of childhood obesity within a generation, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

IN RECOGNITION OF MS. BARB DEMARCO'S DECADES OF ACTIVISM IN THE WEST BLOOMFIELD COMMUNITY AND HER NINE YEARS OF SERVICE TO ITS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. PETERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Barb DeMarco, a member of the West Bloomfield School District Board of Education and lifelong local activist, on the occasion of her retirement. As a Member of Congress, it is both my honor and privilege to recognize Ms. DeMarco for her decades of service and work to build a better future for the West Bloomfield community and its youth.

For the past 25 years, Ms. DeMarco has been at the fore of many grassroots initiatives in West Bloomfield to improve the quality of life for its residents. Ms. DeMarco was often the driving force behind many of the millage initiatives that were directed toward acquiring and developing land for use as community